

## SCMS Pedagogy Award Committee

Dear Committee:

I write in support of Chuck Kleinhans who is nominated for the SCMS Pedagogy Award. I've been a colleague of Chuck's at Northwestern for twenty-eight years. During this time I served as Chair of the department, Director of the MFA program, and Associate Dean in the Graduate School (at the same time Chuck was the Director of the PhD program in Radio/TV/Film). These positions provided different vantage points from which to observe - and admire - Chuck's work with students.

Chuck is a dedicated and passionate teacher, at both the undergraduate and graduate level. At core is his commitment to combining theory and practice, studies with production. Over the years this has ranged from teaching freshman and sophomore undergraduate production courses in Super 8, 35mm still photography, and beginning video - all with a strong theoretical foundation - to leading doctoral seminars that encourage students to explore theoretical ideas through creative work. He recently taught a class on Sound, Image, Text taken by both PhD and MFA students, where students were encouraged to explore the theoretical and aesthetic ideas through original scholarship alongside creative work. As you can see, Chuck is a nimble crosser of boundaries. Students flock to his classes, which combine intellectual rigor with a nuanced understanding of how creative works can be an important form of inquiry.

In the classroom Chuck has full command of the material, a clear and organized manner of lecture presentation, and sophisticated discussion-leading skills. This would be expected in courses such as Film Theory, Film History, and various film criticism courses. But it is all the more impressive since he also teaches classes in the area of media and culture where students come to the material with already formed strong opinions: Experimental Film, Feminist Film Theory and Criticism, Melodrama and Soap Opera, Third World Cinema, Film Aesthetics/Sexual Representation, and Popular Culture. In these classes Chuck is able to balance a thorough presentation of the material with an understanding of the undercurrents brought into these courses by the students -- issues of race, gender, and class.

Chuck's commitment to graduate education goes beyond the classroom. As Director of Graduate Studies in RTF he started, and continues to conduct, annual workshops on grant writing and conference presentations. Chuck has supervised over thirty completed dissertations and counting, more than everyone else in the department combined. And he's the only Cinema Studies faculty in the department who consistently works with MFA students - coming to quarterly critiques of their work as well as serving on many MFA thesis committees.

At the undergraduate level, Chuck was central to the development of new courses combining theory and practice at Northwestern. In the early 90s he was part of a three-member faculty task force that originated the highly successful Media Literacy course, an

introductory theory/practice class in media arts and cultural criticism for non-majors. This highly popular course ran for ten years and evolved into the department's current offering for freshman and non-major seniors. In addition, he was the only RTF faculty member actively involved in the Integrated Media Arts Program from 1989-1999. This integrated arts program for undergraduates, Directed by Professor Carol Simpson Stern, Performance Studies, was funded by the Ford Foundation. For this program Chuck developed one of the first classes taught at Northwestern using desktop computers as a means of both creative expression and cultural understanding. This highlights another of Chuck's strengths: over the years he's constantly challenged and stretched the idea of what takes place in the classroom. In addition to Media Literacy and computer assisted education, he made significant, and early, contributions to feminist, queer, and gender analysis of culture, providing students with intellectual as well as cultural and political insights. These later examples are a model for how good scholarship (Chuck's has been fueled by his ground breaking work on Jump Cut) can be productively brought into the classroom. And how a gifted teacher can create an environment where social justice and openness to class, race/ethnic, and gender issues and diversity can flourish.

Chuck invests an enormous amount of energy into developing course materials for new and old courses alike. Since we taught many of the same beginning classes, I often borrowed the materials Chuck created. They were always inventive, and often quite witty. Lecture notes of thoroughness and clarity, obscure but perfect film clips, slides he actually shot to illustrate technical or aesthetic ideas – Chuck is generous in sharing both his knowledge and classroom preparations.

In sum, Chuck's pedagogy is multi-faceted and innovative. Whether teaching undergraduates, graduate students, advanced PhD seminars, or working with MFAs, he challenges students to experiment with ideas as well as modes of presentation. He is a strong and powerful teacher and I can think of no better recipient for an SCMS teaching award. I give him my enthusiastic recommendation.

Sincerely,

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